

ranking members of the Committee on Armed Services and the Committee on Environment and Public Works. As chairman of the EPW Committee and a senior member of the Armed Services Committee, I thank Chairman WARNER and Senator LEVIN for working with Senator JEFFORDS and myself.

Mr. JEFFORDS. I too support this order, and I thank my colleagues on both the EPW Committee and Armed Services for working together on this request.

HONORING JAMES T. O'TOOLE

Mr. THOMAS. Mr. President, I rise today to express my thanks to James "Jim" O'Toole for all of his hard work and efforts with the Parks and Historic Preservation Subcommittee which I chair.

Born and raised in San Francisco, Jim O'Toole is a graduate of St. Ignatius College Prep and the University of San Francisco. After a 23-year career with the National Park Service, he came to Washington, D.C. in 1987 as part of the U.S. Department of the Interior's Management Development Program where he also served on a professional fellowship to the Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources. After the completion of his fellowship, Mr. O'Toole resigned from the Park Service and assumed the roles as professional staff member for the committee. During his tenure in the Senate, he served as professional staff for the minority for the Subcommittee on Public Lands, National Parks and Forests from 1987 to 1994, and with the majority for the Subcommittee on National Parks, Historic Preservation and Recreation from 1994 until now.

Mr. O'Toole's primary issue responsibilities encompassed all work relating to the Subcommittee on National Parks, Historic Preservation and Recreation, including: oversight of the National Park Service and Park Police; Wild and Scenic Rivers; National Trails and Recreation Areas; Historic Sites and Preservation; Military Parks and Battlefields; Land and Water Conservation Fund; outdoor recreation resources; preservation of prehistoric ruins and objects of interests on the public domain; concessions programs affecting federal land management agencies; and various public land management issues. Over the past fourteen years, the bulk of the Senate Energy Committee legislation has been reported from the National Parks Subcommittee which Jim staffed. Mr. O'Toole was also the primary Senate staffer for H.R. 3248, the Omnibus Parks and Public Lands Act of 1997, (P.L. 104-333). This law contains the precedent setting San Francisco Presidio legislation which has been used as a template for similar private sector initiatives including the Oklahoma City Memorial and the Baca Ranch in New Mexico.

More recently, Jim was instrumental in the passage of the Vision 2020 Parks

Restoration Act, P.L. 105-391. Vision 2020 represents the culmination of a three-year effort and the first major reform of the National Park Service in more than 30 years, including an 11 year effort to reform the Agency's Concession Management Program.

After 14 dedicated years working for the Senate Energy Committee, and more than 23 years with the National Park Service, it is with gratitude and great enthusiasm that I convey my personal thanks and appreciation to Jim O'Toole. I also announce that Jim is officially retired from his life of public service as of today, and he will be joining the private sector.

Again, I express my appreciation to Mr. O'Toole and I wish him well with all of his new ventures and future challenges.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

TRIBUTE TO FIRE CHIEF STEVE PAULSELL

• Mr. BOND. Mr. President, I rise to pay tribute to Fire Chief Steve Paulsell who for the past 25 years has been Chief of the Fire District in Boone County, MO. When Mr. Paulsell became Fire Chief in 1997, the fire department was volunteer and consisted of six stations and 50 firefighters. Under Chief Paulsell's supervision, the fire district has become a national leader in fire and emergency service. Chief Paulsell's departmental accomplishments include: growth from six to fourteen fire stations in 2003, over 300 volunteer personnel, creation of one of 28 Federal Emergency Management Agency urban search and rescue task forces, an FBI accredited bomb squad, award-winning elementary school education life safety program, creation of fire and building codes in Boone County, and original creator of the Joint Communications 911 Center. Chief Paulsell's personal accomplishments include: International Association of Fire Chief's Fire Chief of the Year in 1996, chair of the Missouri Fire Service Alliance, National Fire Academy course developer, and developer of Missouri State Fire Mutual Aid system. In addition to these accomplishments, Mr. Paulsell has testified on behalf of the Nation's fire service to the Senate.

Boone County Fire District Board President Willis Smith praises Chief Paulsell and states, "He was the right man to lead our fire department in 1977 and he is still the right man to lead. He has the vision, insight and leadership abilities to continue to grow this department." I commend Boone County Fire Chief Steve Paulsell for his dedicated service to protecting and improving the quality of fire and emergency services for Missourians, and for making the Boone County Fire District a model for our country. •

FILIBUSTERS ON JUDICIAL NOMINEES

• Mrs. BOXER. Mr. President, last week in the Senate, I indicated that with the exception of Supreme Court nominees, I believed that if a judicial nominee answers the questions posed to him or her and provides the Senate with the information needed in order for us to perform our constitutional role of advice and consent, I would not engage in a filibuster on the nomination.

I made this remark expecting that the so-called blue slip process would be honored. That is, if a Senator from the nominee's home State did not return a blue slip, that nominee would not have a hearing, would not be considered in the Judiciary Committee, and would never even come before the full Senate. A filibuster would not be possible because the nomination would not leave the Committee.

After my remarks, however, something happened that makes me question that assumption. I heard on good authority that hearings are being considered on nominees for whom a blue slip has not been returned.

Given this development, it is possible that the Senate could, in the very near future, be asked to vote on a nominee for whom a blue slip was never returned. At the time of my statement last week, I was not aware that such an abrupt change in Senate practice was being contemplated so seriously and so quickly.

Therefore, Mr. President, if a nominee were to come before the full Senate without a blue slip having been returned by a home State Senator, I reserve the right to participate in a filibuster on that nomination.

Furthermore, after I gave my statement last week, an incident occurred in the Senate Judiciary Committee that is of great concern to me and should be to the entire Senate. The rules of the Judiciary Committee require at least one Member of the minority party to agree to end debate on a matter before the Committee. Despite this rule, and despite the fact that no one on the Democratic side voted to end debate, the Committee held a vote on two circuit court nominees anyway.

If Committee rules are going to be ignored—if the rights of the minority party and the interests of the minority party are trampled upon—this process is going to break down. It may take a filibuster in the full Senate to ensure that the rules are followed.

Finally, Mr. President, when President Bush was elected, he pledged to govern from the center. Judicial candidates who are not moderate, mainstream nominees violate that pledge. I want to hold President Bush to his pledge, so I also reserve the right to filibuster a nominee who is far outside the mainstream. •